



Account of Purley on Thames

Chronicles 1980-1984

1980 - 28/29 Eliz II

MARCH 1980

In March Newbury District Council approved an allocation of 12 trees and 40 whips to be planted at the recreation Ground and near bus stops as part of their programme to provide trees to replace the devastation caused by dutch elm disease over the past few years. (S11-DS)

Charles W. Edwards died on 12th March aged 73. He commenced doing precision engineering from Purley Garage some 40 years previously and during the war made aeroplane parts, especially for spitfires. (S1-5/80)

APRIL 1980

A traffic survey was conducted at the Long lane Oxford Road junction in April. In the survey period 745 cars entered the junction from Pangbourne of which 78 turned right up Long Lane, 328 approached from Reading of which 63 turned up Long Lane and 210 came down Long Lane of which 130 turned left and 90 turned right. One might suspect the surveyor had a problem with his arithmetic!! (ref 351)

A site meeting at The Long Lane / Oxford Road junction was held on April 16th attended by County Councillor Frank Lewis and District Councillor John Chapman It was generally agreed that traffic signals offered the best solution (ref 351)

June 1980

At the AGM of the Parish Council in June, John Southall of Nursery Gardens was co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Parish council caused by a shortage of candidates at the election, no one had called for another election so co-option was permissible. John Bucknell was re-elected chairman (S1-7/80)

The County Transportation Committee rescinded the protected line of the Purley bypass. The plan had been for a single carriageway highway which skirted the south of Pangbourne to a roundabout in front of Purley Hall. It then continued to the south of the recreation ground, crossing Long Lane in a cutting and then following the Purley - Tilehurst boundary to the new roundabout which had just been built at the junction of Knowsley Road and Oxford Road. The reasons given were that there was no prospect of ever being able to afford the £7-10 Million that would be required and leaving a protected line was causing a blight on adjacent properties and a source of future nuisance.(S1-7/80, 352)

July 1980

Several parents of children at Long Lane School were incensed that their children had been asked to write an essay entitled 'How to murder a friend'. The case attracted National Press and television coverage but it all died down very quickly when the school governors decided that there was no

need for any action as the whole affair had been grossly exaggerated (S7)

The Foundation meeting for the First Purley Cubs and Scouts was held at the Memorial Hall on 21st. July. The organiser was Russell Wilkin of St Mary's Ave. (S1-7/81)

August 1980

A number of fine beech trees in Purley Beeches had to be felled in August for safety reasons as they overlooked the railway and had become dehydrated. (S6-15/8/80)

September 1980

In September two Vietnamese families moved into Purley. Two houses in Lister Close and Chiltern View had been allotted by Newbury District Council as part of their commitment to provide ten houses in the District. The houses were furnished after an appeal by the Pangbourne Volunteer Centre and work-parties got the houses cleaned and stocked with food. The two families had escaped from North Vietnam on boats after the government there had started treating the ethnic Chinese as potential traitors. They were picked up by a British boat and landed in Hong Kong where the British Government accepted responsibility for settling them.(S1-10/80)

October 1980

The first Cub Scouts from the First Purley Scout Troup were invested at the Memorial Hall on 27th October (S1-12/80)

November 1980

In November the Alternative Services Book was published and reviewed for use in Purley Church. It was finally decided to use the Communion Rite A for the Sunday morning service and get a special booklet printed. Other services would probably be used also eg marriage, baptism and burial but the remaining services would continue to use the 1662 Prayer Book. (S1-9/80)

On 6th. November a special Parish Meeting was called to discuss the acquisition of land for recreational purposes north of the A329. The meeting got quite heated as the proposals were bitterly contested by some of the residents of the Purley River Estate. Eventually four acres were purchased with a grant of £10,000 from Newbury District Council and named Bucknell's Meadow. (S1-11/80)

29/30 Eliz II 1981

January 1981

Nellie Hawkins died on 9th January. She was the widow of the Reverend Harold Hawkins who had been Rector of Purley from 1961 to 1969

Planning Permission was granted for the Church extension by Newbury District Council on Jan 7th. The Planning Officers had recommended Refusal (S7-9/1/81)

March 1981

Norman Horsley was licensed as a lay reader at Christ-Church Cathedral Oxford, on 21st March. Norman was one of the first residents of Purley Beeches (S1-3/81)

31st March was the closing date for objections to a proposed faculty to remove certain tombstones from the Church Yard and resite them to allow for the Lych Gate to be moved northwards when the

extension was built (S1-3/81)

May 1981

The Census was held in May and when the first results were obtained in September, the population for Purley was recorded at 4062, an increase of 55% over the 2615 reported in 1971 (S11-PR-9/81)

Susan Lobb of the Wessex Archaeological Trust came to talk on 14th May to people interested in what might be found when the church extension was built. Included in the planning permission had been a condition that the unit had a right to examine and monitor the work but it emerged that the unit were unable to tackle the work properly and suggested that a do-it-yourself excavation might be in order.(S1-7/81)

July 1981

Ken Venners died at Battle Hospital on 6th July. He had come to Purley when he was 11 and had been an active member of the community, especially as a member of the Thames Vale Singers and the Cricket Club. He had originally had a small Farm but in later years he had operated a business called CaraVenners involved with caravans on the land between the railway and the Reading Road west of Westbury Lane (S1-8/81)

A start was made on the excavation at St Mary's Church on the site to be disturbed by the Church extension. It was organised by John Chapman and went on most weekends until the weather made digging impracticable (S1-7/81)

September 1981

A boat trip to the grounds of Hardwick House was organised by the Church on 12th September. Three boatloads left from Mapledurham Lock and there was a bonfire and picnic /barbecue. (S1-8/81)

Newbury District Council gave £25,000 towards the Cotswold Sports Centre expansion, subject to further investigation by Officers. The total cost was given as £102,318 (S11)

On 28th September the Cotswold Sports Centre was opened with a three court badminton hall and changing facilities (S1-10/81)

October 1981

Hugh Duncan died at the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed on 19th October aged 85. He was born in Wenvoe, Glamorgan and won three rugby caps for England in 1922 before injury cut short his rugby career. He joined the Welch Regiment in 1914 and eventually rose to the rank of Lieut. Colonel. He came to Purley in 1948 when he and a friend purchased Purley Park and turned it into a home for handicapped men. He was renowned in the village for his charm and great kindness to everyone he came in contact with. Latterly he had lived in Long Lane. (S1-11/81)

November 1981

The Annual Remembrance Day Service for the Pangbourne and District British Legion was held at Purley Church. This service rotates each year between Purley, Pangbourne, Sulham, Tidmarsh, Upper Basildon and Ashampstead. (S1-11/81)

DECEMBER 1981

The night of 12th/13th December was very cold. The temperature got down to 10 degrees F. There was a heavy snowfall on the Thursday (10th) with further snow on the 11th. and 13th. The Conservative Association's Pig and Whistle Night at the Memorial Hall on the 12th had to be cancelled. It thawed and began to rain around 9 pm on the 13th.

225 people crowded into the church for the Annual Carol Service on 20th December and over 200 were present at the midnight communion on Christmas Eve.

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1982 - 30/31 Eliz II

JANUARY 1982

After a very protracted debate it was finally agreed to provide traffic lights at the Long Lane / Oxford Road junction (ref 351)

A new survey of sub-standard plots and dwellings on the Purley River estate was carried out in January. 273 properties were surveyed, of which 52% had been constructed in the previous 15 years. 12 were in such bad repair that they could not reasonably be restored and a further 8 were declared unfit for human habitation. 22 were found to lack at least one standard amenity (ref 359)

There was an accident at the Long Lane/Oxford Road junction at 6 pm on Sunday 3rd January. A motor bike with two passengers come from the Reading direction hit a car which was turning right out of Long Lane. Both passngers were badly injured.

On 5th January the Thames Vale Singers began rehearsals for Carmina Burana for the forthcoming performance at the Albert Hall.

At the eastern area planning committee meeting on 6th January Newbury DC turned down an application for 16 houses.

January was quite cold. Snow fell on the 8th and 9th but it was not until the 15th that it had thawed out sufficiently for the dustbin men to empty the bins. Long Lane School closed on the 11th because of frozen fuel oil, the cubs had to meet at Deneffield and the scouts at the Memorial Hall that day.

The rector advertised for a musical director on the 11th.

John Bone was appointed bishop of Reading on the 12th to succeed Eric Wilde who was about to retire.

A grant of £3000 from the Sports Council was approved to help pay for additions to the sports hall at Deneffield.

FEBRUARY 1982

At the Newbury District Council review of expenditure in February it was reported that the St Mary's Ave Council Housing Site scheme would cost £1,306,128 of which £7,200 remained to be spent (S11)

The Pangbourne Telephone Exchange was able to handle 2438 lines and was soon to be extended to 2858 which is its maximum capacity with Strowger equipment due to lack of space. There were 408

business lines, 1809 residential lines and 8 public call boxes (S186-1)

JULY 1982

Elizabeth Duncan of Long Lane was elected President of the Reading Inner Wheel (S7-8/7/82)

OCTOBER 1982

Ian Gillan, the rock star, who was living in Nursery Gardens, was involved in a take over bid for Reading Football Club - the bid failed (S7-14/10/82)

A Planning Application was made to build 16 houses on the Pond Field. It was turned down by NDC and went to appeal. This was dismissed. (S7-16/10/82)

NOVEMBER 1982

Douglas Shaw aged 22 of Wintringham Way, was killed on his motor bike in an accident on Overdown Road in November (S7-15/10/82)

1983 - 31/32 Eliz II

JANUARY 1983

An oak tree was planted on the corner of Long Lane and the Oxford Road to commemorate Fred Saunders. It was planted by his wife Kit on 12th January.

FEBRUARY 1983

MARCH 1983

The Topping-Out ceremony for the Church hall was held on Friday 13th March (S208)

On 14th March Reading Transport extended their no 19 service to the River Estate. The service was renumbered 39 with 38 used for evening and Sunday services which stopped at all bus stops in Reading, whereas the no 39 stopped only at key stops. The 19 used to terminate at Highfield Road and the new service ran down Long Lane to the Oxford Road, down New Hill and then via St Mary's Ave, Colyton Way, Wintringham Way, Chestnut Grove and back via Brading Way. (S8-11.3.83)

APRIL 1983

On 11th April Alder Valley began a new bus service (no 119) operating from Reading, along the Oxford Road, down New Hill, Purley Village, Purley Lane, Long Lane, Dark Lane, Tilehurst Triangle and Calcot to the Savacentre. A special introductory free service was run on Thursday 7th April departing Purley at 1000 for residents of Purley (S6-31.3.83)

MAY 1983

Fund raising continued for the Church Extension. Various fund raising events had been held and in May the following were reported:-

- Reading Half Marathon sponsoring £1300
- St George's Day Concert £97
- Sybil Pryor's Coffee evening £34

- Donation from St George's Press £50
- Anonymous £200
- Stall Holder's Market £105

(Sunday leaflet)

Tony Durant, the Conservative candidate in the General Election addressed a public meeting at the Memorial Hall on 25th April, 46 people attended. At the election on May 5th he won the seat polling xxxxx votes against xxx for Jim Day (liberal) and xxx for xxxxx(labour)

At the District Council election held on 5th May John Chapman (Conservative) polled 978 votes against Doug Fossey (liberal) 387 votes. There were 12 spoiled papers.

The Thames Vale singers put on a concert version of Merrie England at the Memorial Hall on May 26th and 27th.

JUNE 1983

JULY 1983

Kevin Tickner of Apple Close was drowned while swimming with friends near Kings Meadow (7-18/7/83)

Berkshire beat Buckinghamshire 137-102 in a Middleton Cup bowls match held at the Trenthams Bowling Club (7-18/7/83)

AUGUST 1983

SEPTEMBER 1983

OCTOBER 1983

The question of the Aldermaston pipeline made its regular appearance in the Reading press after yet another editor discovered its existence. The editor wrote to the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine, asking all the questions again.

DECEMBER 1983

Derek Hopkins resigned as Headmaster of Denefield School. He had been in post since the school opened in 1976. (8-16/12/83)

Reading Borough Council had been proposing to extend their boundaries to take in Purley. There was a vigorous reaction from the people of Purley and a petition was presented at the Civic Offices by members of the Parish Council. In a vote conducted by Newbury DC, 96.6% were in favour of remaining within Newbury District in a 75% poll. (EP 6/10/838-16/12/83)

The Long Lane School Christmas Bazaar raised £380 (8-2/12/83)

1984 - 32/33 Eliz II

February 1984

Ian Sawyer, a 14 year old from Purley, ran away from home and his father made a desperate plea in the papers for his return (EP 2/2/84)

Sir Michael Giddings of Long Lane was subjected to a 'vicious campaign of threats' as he tried to conduct the public enquiry into the Archway Road scheme in London. In February he stepped down to protect his wife (EP 29/2/84)

May 1984

Mike Scott had been appointed the new Head of Denefield School. Denefield was involved in a dispute between teachers and Berks CC but senior staff at the school vowed to keep it open at lunchtime despite a teachers walk out (EP 3/5/84)

Arthur John Dimond Bucknell died at his new home in Dorset on May 21st. He had formerly farmed Home Farm and had been both District Councillor on Bradfield RDC and Chairman of the Parish Council (DT 23/5/84)

June 1984

The long awaited expansion of the gas main for the River Estate was installed. New Hill was closed on Sunday June 10th to allow pipe laying. Southern Gas had required a connection charge of £255 per household and would not start until they had received 110 commitments with a deposit of £38. Mrs Jennifer Jones of Wintringham Way was the principal organiser of the local campaign.

July 1984

Newbury District Council introduced its new Wheeled Bin refuse collection service on 23rd July Exhibitions had been held at the Savacentre and Pangbourne. The first bins collected under the new scheme were in Purley, starting on Purley Rise. (ref 353 EP 12/7/84 EP 2/8/84)

Harry Tee the Chief Executive of Reading Borough Council made an attack upon the referendum recently carried out by Newbury District Council which decisively rejected Reading's bid to take over Purley. (EP4/7/84)

OCTOBER 1984

Three pupils from Denefield came second in a national competition for designing kitchens. They were presented with a silver cup and £250 (8-19/10/84)

Newbury DC introduced its alarm system for elderly persons living alone (7-25/10/84)

NOVEMBER 1984

Reading Musical Society presented 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 3rd November. The hall was packed (8-9/11/84)

Masked raiders robbed Annetts store on Colyton Way on 7th November of about £800. They made their get-away in a car and were chased by a Lucky Clover ice cream van (7-8/11/84)

K1980 15/2/03

